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Governing Council
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GOVERNING COUNCIL

Organizational meeting for 1990

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1st MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 20 February 1990, at 10 a.m.

Temporary President: Mr. PIBULSONGGRAM (Thailand)

President: Mr. POPESCU (Romania)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

OPENING OF THE MEETING

1. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT declared open the organizational meeting of the Governing Council for 1990, and welcomed the newly-elected members of the Council.

2. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) had come far in crystallizing its ambitions for the 1990s and beyond. The guidelines set in decision 89/20 provided a solid basis for its continued strong growth. Its central role in providing technical co-operation had been unanimously endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 44/211 on the comprehensive triennial policy review of operational activities for development.

3. Multilateralism was a concept deserving of full commitment and support. The interests of all members of the Programme would best be served by increased resource flows to developing countries in all regions of the world. Only through accelerated economic and social growth could the world become a place in which all nations prospered in harmony.

4. The Governing Council faced formidable challenges in the 1990s. It would have to address issues such as appropriate successor arrangements to support costs and matters related to its working methods and governance. He hoped that eventual decisions in the latter area would better enable the Council to lay down policy directives. The commemoration of 40 years of technical co-operation in the United Nations should be the occasion for a renewal of the commitment to multilateral development co-operation.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

5. The TEMPORARY PRESIDENT invited the Council to elect a Bureau consisting of a President and four Vice-Presidents, due account being taken, in accordance with rule 11 of its rules of procedure, of the need to ensure equitable geographical representation in the Bureau. Due regard should also be given to the geographical rotation of the office of President among the different regional groups.

6. According to that principle, the President of the Governing Council for 1990 should be elected from among the members of the Eastern European Group of States. That Group had nominated Mr. Popescu (Romania) for the Office of President.

7. Mr. Popescu (Romania) was elected President by acclamation.

8. Mr. Popescu (Romania) took the Chair.

9. The PRESIDENT said that the Governing Council was meeting at a time of worsening economic and social situations in many developing countries, and every effort must be made to meet their urgent needs. The strengthening of operational activities for development, as spelled out by General Assembly resolution 44/211, was an important step in that direction. The leading role of UNDP in technical

(The President)

co-operation must continue, anchored in the concepts of universality, neutrality, voluntary nature, flexibility and responsiveness. The world remained divided into "haves" and "have nots" and the latter were knocking ever more insistently at the door of opportunity. He was certain that generosity and enlightened support through multilateral co-operation would prevail in the face of the desperate plight of peoples in the developing countries.

10. A number of important issues would be under consideration during the special session and the thirty-seventh session of the Governing Council. A concerted effort would be required as the Council embarked on the fifth decade of multilateral technical co-operation for development since the responsibilities facing UNDP would be more demanding and complex than ever before and would require higher and more sustained resource levels.

11. The following candidates had been nominated by their respective regional groups for election as Vice-Presidents of the Council: Mr. Babington (Australia), by the Group of Western European and Other States, Mr. Hamadziripi (Zimbabwe) by the Group of African States, and Mr. Morales Carballo (Cuba) by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States. Consultations were still in progress among the Asian and Pacific States concerning nomination of a candidate for Vice-President. He suggested that the Council return to the election of Vice-Presidents at an appropriate time. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to elect by acclamation the three candidates he had named.

12. Mr. Babington, (Australia), Mr. Hamadziripi (Zimbabwe), and Mr. Morales Carballo (Cuba) were elected Vice-Presidents by acclamation.

13. The PRESIDENT said he would convene a meeting of the Bureau as soon as possible to decide on the assignment of tasks to the Vice-Presidents. In accordance with Council decision 81/37, the Bureau and the Administrator were requested to hold consultations with Member States both before and during the sessions of the Council in order to facilitate the completion of the Council's work. He intended to make full use of such consultations.

14. Mr. DRAPER (Administrator) said that the organizational meeting of the Council would consider the agenda and programme of work for one of the more significant Council sessions in UNDP history. The Council's decisions would have implications for its work through 1996, the end of the fifth programming cycle. Details on the many important agenda items would be provided as the reports on each were introduced.

15. Mr. KUNUGI (Deputy Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)) said that 1989 had been one of the most fruitful years in UNFPA's history. Its most visible event had been the International Forum on Population in the Twenty-first Century, held in Amsterdam, from 6 to 9 November, which had adopted the powerful Amsterdam Declaration, "A Better Life for Future Generations", noted with appreciation by the General Assembly in resolution 44/210. At the culmination of the two-year-long review and assessment of accumulated population experience, delegations had spoken of the need for political commitment to population

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(Mr. Kunugi)

programmes, the importance of national population strategies and programmes, the critical role of women in development, and the need for more resources. The Amsterdam Declaration translated the main findings of the review and assessment into the pillars for the attainment of population goals and objectives. It embodied the near-universal recognition that, unless population growth was controlled, habitat on earth would be destroyed by ecological disaster and/or violent migration processes, and called for due account to be taken of the Forum's results in formulating the new international development strategy, as well as at the 1992 Conference on Environment and Development.

16. An issue which had recently arisen was the sharing of joint premises by the members of the Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), consisting of UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP and IFAD. UNFPA already shared premises with UNDP in most field duty stations. UNDP was now considering the construction of offices in developing countries, and the question of the form of UNFPA participation in construction costs had arisen. By decision 79/43, as amended through decision 89/57, the Governing Council established a Reserve for Field Accommodation from which UNDP gave loans to Governments to construct office buildings of which the Governments would become owners. In order to pay back the loans to UNDP, the occupants of the buildings, such as UNDP, UNFPA and WFP, paid rent to the Governments. UNFPA would, of course, pay rent in all such new buildings, but the question had arisen whether UNFPA should set up its own Reserve for Field Accommodation, or whether the granting of such loans to Governments for initial construction should remain solely out of UNDP resources.

17. The population of the developing world stood at 4 billion. Just two decades previously it had been 2.7 billion. Yearly population increments in the developing world over the next 10 years would approach some 92 million per year. Those statistics gave a sense of urgency to the population problems being faced. The commitments made during the coming decade would determine what sort of planet would be left to future generations.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

18. The agenda was adopted.

19. The PRESIDENT drew the attention of the Council to documents DP/1990/1 and DP/1990/2, which contained information on the documentation for the organizational meeting for 1990.

PROGRESS REPORT ON RATIONALIZATION OF THE WORK OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL, INCLUDING MEASURES TAKEN CONCERNING DOCUMENTATION

20. The PRESIDENT said that, pursuant to its decision 89/18, the Governing Council would hear a report by the Secretary on measures taken to provide timely documentation in all working languages and to ensure interpretation for all meetings, and on other measures taken to rationalize the Council's work.

21. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) said that the thirty-seventh session would be a very important one for the Governing Council because of the crucial questions before it, such as the fifth programming cycle, funding strategies and the role of UNDP in the 1990s. The nature of the issues to be considered made the rationalization of the Council's work all the more important. In that connection, he recalled Governing Council decision 81/37 on the streamlining and rationalization of its work. The Secretariat had been making every effort to implement that and other relevant decisions, and he urged the Council members to give their full support to that endeavour.

22. In its decision 89/20, the Governing Council had invited its President to conduct consultations with Council members, observers and other interested parties, on ways to improve the working methods of the Council with a view to achieving greater efficiency. Those consultations had been held on 13 February 1990. At that time, several delegations had expressed concern regarding the length of Council sessions. Until 1977, the Council had held two sessions a year for a total of seven weeks. It had then decided that, beginning in 1978, it would hold one annual session lasting four weeks, with a brief organizational meeting in February of each year and the possibility of holding special sessions as necessary. However, despite subsequent attempts to reduce the total meeting time, each Governing Council session for the past few years had lasted seven or eight weeks. Furthermore, special sessions were becoming the rule rather than the exception. Consequently, he urged the Council members in adopting decisions during the current session, to avoid adding items to be considered at special sessions.

23. During the consultations, concerns had also been voiced about the cost of attending lengthy sessions and intersessional meetings. Such costs were a burden on both national Governments and the United Nations budget, which financed the total cost of UNDP meetings, including interpretation facilities and the necessary documentation.

24. The UNDP Administration had come up with suggestions or had already taken steps to improve the overall state of documentation. With respect to reducing the number of reports, tangible progress would be possible only if Council members were prepared to request fewer reports and to forgo reports of lesser importance. In that connection, the Administration was suggesting the elimination of routine progress reports on items for which no decision was required. In such cases, it might be appropriate to have an oral report or a one-page written summary, to be supplemented with a lengthier oral statement.

25. The total amount of documentation had been reduced to some extent. On the whole, documents for the 1990 session would be shorter, with only a few achieving the maximum limit of 24 pages and a few exceeding that limit. The total number of documents would be 143, in comparison with the 147 documents issued in 1989. In his opinion, however, 143 documents was still too many.

26. In order to facilitate the preparation of pre-session documentation, the secretariat had instituted certain new procedures, including decentralization and increased consultation. A computerized monitoring and management system for

(Mr. Kirdar)

Governing Council documentation was being prepared. Improvements had also been made in the procedure for advanced distribution of documentation to Governing Council members. Documents were currently delivered to the delegations concerned within 48 hours after approval of the final draft by UNDP.

27. Pursuant to Governing Council decision 89/18, meetings at the senior staff level had been held between the United Nations Department of Conference Services and the Governing Council Admnistration to discuss the timely distribution of Governing Council documentation and the provision of interpretation services. The Department of Conference Services had assured the Administration that every effort would be made to distribute documents in a timely fashion. At the same time, the Administration had pledged to do its utmost to submit documents for translation within the stated deadlines. It was emphasized that the Governing Council could not expect any special treatment with regard to the provision of conference services. It was also pointed out that reductions in conference servicing staff had occurred, while requests for documentation continued to increase.

28. With respect to interpretation services, the Secretariat was proposing that, during its thirty-seventh session, the Governing Council should hold only two meetings at one time, rather than three as in the past. Nevertheless, deliberations on the fifth programming cycle and the agency support cost report might require the holding of informal consultations simultaneous with the formal meetings. In that event, the restricted availability of conference services meant that the informal meetings would have to be held without interpretation. Alternatively, funds could be allocated by the Governing Council for the purpose of providing additional interpretation staff.

29. As part of its thirty-seventh session, the Governing Council would hold a three-day high-level segment to consider policy issues. While the Governing Council had not identified a specific issue for discussion at the 1990 high-level segment, it might wish to select a topic for the 1991 segment.

30. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) suggested that the Secretary's statement should be distributed as a conference room paper.

31. The PRESIDENT said that that would be done.

32. Mr. CRUSE (France) said that his delegation was uncertain about the idea of holding informal consultations without interpretation. Lengthy discussions that were conducted in English only could cause serious difficulties for certain delegations.

33. Ms. PETTITT (United Kingdom) said that she was not entirely satisfied with the suggestion to substitute oral for written reports. Perhaps certain reports of lesser importance could be included in the Administrator's report, thus reducing the overall number of reports.

34. While she supported the idea of making an early decision with respect to a theme for the 1991 policy segment, she wished to observe that themes should not be adopted automatically, but only when justified.

35. Mrs. DUDIK-GAYOSO (United States of America) said that she supported the previous speaker's suggestion that certain reports might be included in the Administrator's report. However, if that were to be done, the Administrator's report had to be distributed earlier than usual. With regard to the 1990 policy segment, there was no need for a specific theme. Discussion on the fifth programming cycle would be sufficient.

36. Mr. AQUARONE (Netherlands) said that if written reports were to be replaced by oral ones, the latter must be subject to a strict time-limit. The Council should also consider streamlining its agenda, concentrating on those items which required an immediate decision. Perhaps certain agenda items could be deferred until the 1991 session, so that the Council could focus in 1990 on the two major issues before it.

37. Mr. VOICU (Romania) pointed out that several of the ideas suggested for streamlining the work of the Council were also under discussion within a more general context in the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization.

38. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) said that, while he sympathized with the French representative's comments on the need for interpretation during informal discussions, meetings servicing had been planned on the assumption that the Council would, as it had itself decided, hold no more than two meetings simultaneously. In fact there might be a little leeway, since additional facilities had been requested for a brief period to accommodate the drafting group. Still, the United Nations would not routinely be able to provide facilities for three simultaneous meetings of UNDP.

39. His suggestion of more oral reports, particularly progress reports, had been an attempt to reduce the volume of documentation; it should be remembered that any formal presentation made during a plenary meeting of the Council was documented in the summary records. The idea of combining several reports into a single document had been suggested before: the problem was that different constituencies always wanted the reports of particular interest to them kept separate. His comments on the selection of a theme for the thirty-eighth session had been based on decision 81/37 of the Council, which specified that the Council should at each session decide on a main area of policy to review at the following session. Finally, he cautioned that streamlining the agenda for the thirty-seventh session by deferring items would only result in a heavier agenda for the following session.

40. Mrs. DUDIK-GAYOSO (United States of America) pointed out that progress reports sometimes prompted delegations to seek action. In the case of her Government, that meant consulting a number of different Government departments, which was hard to do without a written report.

41. From her delegation's point of view, locating resources for the fifth programming cycle seemed an entirely appropriate theme for the June 1990 session; she saw no reason why the Council should look further. On the subject of translation and interpretation facilities, she said that efforts must be made to

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arrange services for informal sessions, perhaps by drawing on the facilities requested for the drafting group, but perhaps also by allocating resources for interpretation services.

42. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) pointed out that his comments on selecting a theme for discussion had been made in reference to the 1991 session, not the 1990 one.

43. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should take note of the Secretary's statement and related observations by delegations.

44. It was so decided.

MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL IN 1990

Special session (DP/1990/L.2 and Add.1)

45. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) introduced the provisional agenda and tentative schedule for the special session of the Council (21-23 February 1990), contained in documents DP/1990/L.2 and Add.1. He suggested that, for the purposes of the session, the Council might wish to waive the rules of procedure requiring a quorum before a meeting could begin, in order to save time.

46. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said he hoped that the Administrator would give a progress report on human resources development in the context of item 7 of the provisional agenda for the special session (DP/1990/L.2).

47. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Council should approve the provisional agenda and tentative schedule for the special session as contained in documents DP/1990/L.2 and Add.1.

48. It was so decided.

Thirty-seventh session (DP/1990/3 and DP/1990/L.3 and Corr.1)

49. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council), introducing documents DP/1990/3 and DP/1990/L.3 and Corr.1, pointed out that under item 10 (b) of the provisional agenda (DP/1990/L.3, annex I) delegations might wish to address issues raised in General Assembly resolution 44/211, paragraphs 25, 30 and 31. Efforts had been made to avoid scheduling more than two meetings simultaneously, and a number of items had been consolidated. The funds and programmes to be considered in detail at the thirty-seventh session were the United Nations Volunteers programme and the United Nations Development Fund for Women. Finally, he pointed out that the high-level segment would occupy only three days, from 5 to 7 June: 4 June was a holiday at the Palais des Nations.

50. Mr. ROHNER (Switzerland) said that the Administrator's report on the improvement of working procedures should be included as a separate agenda item, that the discussion of the new sub-item 4 (b) (xiii) listed in document DP/1990/L.3/Corr.1 should include a discussion of the question of governance, and that the question of agency accountability (agenda item 4 (b) (vii)) should be discussed in the context of agency costs. In connection with the provisional timetable set down in annex II of document DP/1990/L.3, he felt that the overview of the mid-term review process should be taken up after the discussion of the individual country projects.

51. Mrs. DUDIK-GAYOSO (United States of America) said that the Administrator's report on senior management structure should be given a special place in the agenda and that adequate time should be allowed for discussion of his report on management reform. With regard to scheduling, she noted that the support cost issue would come up only briefly in the plenary meetings and that it would therefore probably be necessary to make some arrangement for a policy decision on the question in the Drafting Committee before it was referred to the Budget Committee. She also wondered if enough time had been allocated for consideration of the mid-term reviews and for the drafting group.

52. Mr. AQUARONE (Netherlands) said his delegation felt that the question of refugees and displaced persons should be discussed in 1990, in view of the discussions of the subject now taking place in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and that emphasis should be placed on the present and future role of UNDP in the field of refugee aid and development; a written report on that issue should also be prepared for the Council. He suggested that the title of agenda item 4 (b) (xiii) should accordingly be changed to "Refugees and displaced persons: the present and future role of UNDP in the field of refugee aid and development".

53. Mr. CRUSE (France) agreed that the three vital issues the Swiss representative had referred to should be discussed, in the order in which that representative had mentioned them, and emphasized the need for the Council to take a quick decision on the support cost issue referred to by the United States representative.

54. Mr. MISSARY (Democratic Yemen) asked why no reference had been made in the provisional agenda to the question of assistance to Democratic Yemen.

55. Mr. PETTITT (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) said his delegation agreed to waive the 10-week rule but would again appeal to the Secretariat to ensure that the report on United Nations technical co-operation activities and the annotated agenda were issued in good time. He noted that, although the Secretary had referred to agenda item 10 (b), no time had been assigned in the timetable for discussion of that item. The same was true of the question of the fifth cycle and agency support costs referred to by the United States representative.

56. Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany) suggested that agenda item 4 (b) (iv) should be deleted.

57. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) said that an effort would be made to comply with the suggestions made by the Swiss representative. With regard to the United States representative's suggestions concerning the reports on senior management structure and management reform, it had been expected that those items would be dealt with under agenda item 9 (b); that would be made clear in the revised agenda by adding the two questions as separate sub-items. The Secretariat would also do its best to allocate adequate time for discussion of the mid-term reviews.

58. With regard to the suggestion made by the Netherlands representative for retitling the agenda item on refugees and displaced persons, he said that, if the Council agreed, the item would be retitled as that representative had proposed.

59. The three items referred to by the representatives of France and Switzerland would be regrouped so that they would be taken up successively, in the order proposed.

60. The question of aid to Democratic Yemen could be taken up after agenda item 4 (d) (iv); it would be added to the agenda as agenda item 4 (d) (v).

61. The Secretariat would do its best to comply with the request by the United Kingdom that the report on United Nations technical co-operation activities and the annotated agenda were issued in good time. The failure to include discussion of agenda items 10 (a) and (b) in the programme of work would be corrected. He noted that if the suggestion made by the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany were adopted, the Council would have more time for the discussion of the United Nations Volunteers programme.

62. Mrs. DUDIK-GAYOSO (United States of America) asked when the question of the impact of management improvements would be taken up.

63. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) said it would be taken up under the agenda item on the Administrator's Annual Report for 1989.

64. Mr. KUFOUR (Ghana) asked when the items concerning Africa would be discussed, and noted that the Council had requested a report on agenda item 4 (b) (iv), which the representative of the Federal Republic of Germany had suggested should be deleted.

65. Mr. KIRDAR (Secretary of the Council) said that the African items would be taken up one day later than originally proposed.

66. The PRESIDENT suggested that the Secretariat should be asked to submit a revised agenda and timetable, reflecting the suggestions made by Council members, which would then be considered by the Council.

67. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.

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Organizational meeting for 1990

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 2nd MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Tuesday, 20 February 1990, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. POPESCU (Romania)

CONTENTS

Matters relating to the work of the Governing Council in 1990

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL IN 1990 (DP/1990/L.2 and Add.1, DP/1990/L.3 and Corr.1, DP/1990/3)

1. The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Governing Council wished to waive rule 22 of the rules of procedure on the quorum requirement.

2. It was so decided.

3. The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to endorse the suggestions contained in paragraph 10 of documents DP/1990/L.3 and Corr.1.

4. It was so decided.

5. The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the list of speakers for the high-level segment, scheduled for 5 to 7 June, would be opened on 23 April 1990.

6. It was so decided.

7. After a discussion in which Mr. SAHLMANN (Federal Republic of Germany), Mr. PETTITT (United Kingdom) and Mr. CABACTULAN (Philippines) participated, the PRESIDENT suggested a time-limit of 15 minutes for statements during the high-level segment.

8. It was so decided.

9. The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to allocate the items listed in paragraph 15 of documents DP/1990/L.3 and Corr.1 to the Budgetary and Finance Committee.

10. It was so decided.

11. The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to reaffirm the principles guiding the work of its Drafting Group, as contained in section III of decision 83/1, referred to in paragraph 17 of documents DP/1990/L.3 and Corr.1.

12. It was so decided.

13. The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to waive the 10-week rule for submission of the documents indicated in document DP/1990/3. The observation made by the representative of the United Kingdom on provisional agenda item 7 would be taken into account.

14. It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 3.30 p.m.